



Level 146

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Library

[Levels](#) [Sub-](#)
[Layers](#) [Enigmatic](#)
[Levels](#) [Entities](#) [Enigmatic](#)
[Entities](#) [Objects](#) [Phenomena](#) [Tales](#)
[Entries](#) [Themes](#)

[Top Rated New Pages](#)

[Top Pages of All Time](#)

[Newly Created Pages](#)

[Underread Pages](#)

[Random Page](#)

[Lowest Rated Pages](#)

[Tags](#)

Community

[Join The Wiki](#)

[Forum](#) - [New Posts](#)

[Translations Hub](#)

[Authors' Pages](#)

[Meet The Staff](#)

Resources

[FAQ](#)

[Guide Hub](#)

[Sandbox](#)

[Recent Changes](#)

[Site Rules](#)

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A warm fire and a bowl of soup for everyone.

Come in, come in!

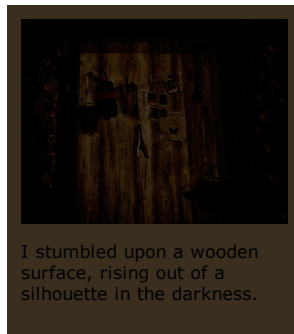
Hello, fellow wanderer! My name is Johannes Copely, and I was asked by the [M.E.G.](#) to document my experiences in Level 146, otherwise known as the Tavern of Thanks.

They've given me a format and a specific style to fill out this form with, but alas, I lack the ability to write so stuffily. I prefer a more personal approach, anyway. I do hope they won't mind; I will still tell you everything that you need to know.

Grab a drink and take a seat, my friend. Get comfortable — this is all in good faith.

Imagine a cold, everlasting winter, a well worn fur jacket singed with ice and wandering snowflakes. Imagine the creak and shuffle of old wood plank chairs and tables and the sight of your warming breath swirling out in front of you to mingle with the rising steam of the hot bowl of soup in your hands. Feel the broth coat your tongue as I tell you the story of how I came across the Tavern of Thanks.

It was a blustery day in [Level 129](#). I had arrived there after accidentally clipping through the Borders of [Level 39](#). It was an unexpected detour, for I had simply planned to take some time to explore and meditate in the Enchanted Forest. Unfortunately, my clothes were rather unaccommodating for this occasion, as all I had on my person was a simple windbreaker jacket, a thin t-shirt, and khaki pants.



I stumbled upon a wooden surface, rising out of a silhouette in the darkness.

As I wandered around the level, I found my situation was even further exacerbated by the distant sound of rolling thunder and the flurries of snow cascading from the sky. I took out my phone, only to find that Level 129 did not have any available connection of any kind. Thus, I was completely unprepared when the tiny snowflakes began to suddenly turn to chunks of ice. They crashed down all around me, slamming into the ground and shattering violently. The sky turned pitch-black, and I resorted to using my phone's flashlight app to guide me. After what seemed like an eternity, I stumbled upon a wooden surface, rising out of a silhouette in the darkness. It was a door. I felt around for the handle and stumbled in as the chilly shards of ice smashed into the ground and snow behind me. A blast of hot air met my face, and I righted myself, shivering as the cold left my body. I drew my hands to my face and realized that my nose and fingertips were numb. I rubbed my palms together and took in my surroundings.



The floor and the walls were made of warm cobblestone...

The floor and the walls were made of warm cobblestone, reflecting the orange glow from the fireplace in the center of the back wall. On both sides were wooden tables adorned by quaint chairs. The air was warm and full of scents: chestnuts, smoke, meat, fruit, and the smell of ice and steam lifting from human bodies and weathered bowls. The taste of pine lingered in the atmosphere from a small sapling growing in a pot in the corner of the main room.

Lanterns hung from the wooden slanted ceiling, and between them, wreaths with ruby red bows dangled above the tabletops. Candles flickered inside glass cups on top of white thread tablecloths. Despite the small size of the tavern, it was alive with the chatter of weary travelers like myself. A bell jingled as I closed the door behind me, and before me I saw a hand-drawn wooden sign reading "The Tavern of Thanks."

...Oh, what's this? It seems that I've got my own little audience! Well, I certainly can't have you all stand, can I? Here, let's go to the fire. Stories are best told around fires, anyway. I've never fancied myself too much of a storyteller, but I do hope that I can keep you all entertained. Especially the kids — this is an important lesson for you young'uns. Why, it's a lesson that even an adult such as myself needed to know and remember. Listen closely, you all. Lean a little closer — I want you to close your eyes and imagine this next part. It's vital that you focus on the sensation.

Now, where was I? Oh, yes. As I stood, a [Faceling](#) walked up to me, a menu in hand. It was embroidered with gold floral patterns atop a smooth dark leather surface. I opened it up and — huzzah! 'Twas a menu with only one item for sale: the Soup of Gratitude. I barely had any time to process this odd occurrence when a second Faceling in a waitresses' outfit stopped by me and cupped her hand around her ear to show me she was listening. Bemused, I ordered. She nodded and scribbled something down onto her little pad, which I found quite silly, given that that there was only one thing to order, but as I was saying...

While I was waiting, I took the time to listen to the sound of the blizzard outside. Despite the ferocity of the storm from before, the tavern stood strong and firm. I found myself taking off my windbreaker jacket and hanging it upon the back of the chair. I stretched my arms, free from the binds of my coat. I thought, *how*

fortunate it is that I am in here, comfortable and warm, instead of stranded out there in the blizzard.

In almost no time at all, the Faceling came back with a hot bowl of soup in her hands. I stared at the contents, feeling my mouth water. The broth was an opaque tan, like that of potato soup. In the middle were two little cilantro leaves. I cupped my hands around the bowl and felt the warmth of the carved wood bowl seep into my skin, shooing away the last remaining vestiges of numbness within.



In the middle were two little cilantro leaves.

I took the wooden spoon in my hands and blew on the broth in front of my lips, watching the steam swirl about like the wisps of a playful ghost. I opened my mouth and drank. Instantly, I felt an ecstatic feeling slide down my throat and flow throughout my body. I felt an emotion that could only be described as *life* echo from my fingertips to my toes. I quickly finished my meal, and as I did so, I not only felt my hunger be satiated, but my mind and spirit as well. The pride of a great accomplishment filled my heart, as well as the humbleness of a simple pleasantry. Yes, that's it. I was grateful. Thankful to be here, in a warm and safe environment, sheltered from the cold and ice. I realized that I was thankful of so much more, too. The spoon I held was soft and convenient, the sound of chatter was pleasant to my ears. To survive in such an unfamiliar place such as the Backrooms was so fortuitous that I had the luck to be able to take it for granted. To have a home to go back to, to find a community of survivors just like myself, to be gifted the honor to write an article and tell a story that might shape the course of history... it was so simple, yet so revolutionary at the same time, this feeling of gratitude.

Say, have you ever beheld the beauty of a spoon? The fine, perfect quality of its curves, the ingenuity of the people who invented it, the precision of those who produced it. Its universal practicality and simplicity, its ubiquity and its uniqueness, its history and its future. As I held that spoon in my hands, I realized just how grateful I was to hold such a special thing. To have it at my beck and call, to use it with ease.

Are you imagining this feeling as well? Perhaps feeling a little bit of it yourself? Look around you. How many people have come together in collaboration to produce and invent the objects that you use daily? Every pixel on your screen, every page in your book, every step you take in your home is due to someone else's work. Take a moment to recognize their efforts, to thank them either out loud or silently. Feel the gratitude warming your heart and lifting your soul. Treasure that feeling, keep it safe, and never forget it. It is truly one of a kind.

The Soup of Gratitude may have filled my belly with broth for one day, but it has filled my heart with joy ever since. If you ever find yourself in a cold place, or a dark one, search for the Tavern of Thanks. Perhaps we can get another drink sometime — my treat.

Safe travels, have a good day, and most importantly...

Thank you.

[Author\(s\)](#)

« [Level 145](#) | [Level 146](#) | [Level 147](#) »

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